

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Our charity, founded in 1999, has been providing Queensland with effective solutions to youth anti-social behaviour for the past two decades, with over 45,000 disadvantaged and at-risk children and young people benefitting either directly, or indirectly from our early age intervention programs. Ours is an almost 100% volunteer based organisation working with a core of highly qualified individuals as well as university interns in a variety of fields (psychology, social work, promotion and media). Our charity's programs have been recognised for innovation in youth work both nationally (2017 Telstra Business Awards - Charities category), and internationally (2010 Investments in Youth prevention Conference, Sweden). Our programs have been effective at creating meaningful turnarounds in referred children's lives and preventing their descent into different forms of anti-social behaviour (bullying, vandalism, drug taking, youth crime). Despite all of the above, and savings to state government of an estimated \$5.6 million per annum (our programs preventing young people from entering the youth justice system) our non-profit organisation has never received ongoing funding from the Queensland state government (either parties when in power). They have consistently ignored information about our programs despite awards and positive recommendations from school principals about the worth of our programs, favouring the state government's own solutions to attempt to promote the government's competence. The point we wish to make in this submission is about the gross undervaluing of the work of volunteer-based organisations like ours in providing competent solutions to significant community problems. The current much talked about Youth Crime Crisis could have been averted, given substantial investment in community and volunteer-based programs such as ours by our state government.